

# ALABAMA citizen★corps

A Monthly Publication for Alabama Citizen Corps Councils, their Partners and Affiliates

February 2006

Alabama Citizen Corps is a program  
of the Governor's Office of Faith-  
Based and Community Initiatives.

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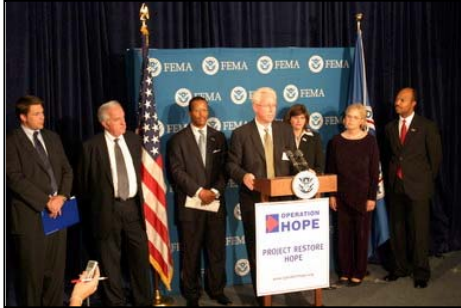
## Message from Alabama's Director of Homeland Security

*"I cannot overstate how important it is for every Alabamian to take appropriate steps to prepare for a natural or man-made disaster. Readiness is a shared responsibility, and so is staying alert to suspicious activities. Please report unlawful behavior or suspicious activities immediately to local law enforcement. It will take a total team effort to eradicate terrorism, so stay ready, stay informed, and stay involved."*

## What is Citizen Corps?

Citizen Corps is a nationwide grass roots movement to actively involve everyone in America in making our communities and our nation safer, stronger, and better equipped for emergencies of all kinds—from preventing small-scale disasters by installing smoke detectors in your home, to learning how to prepare for and respond to large-scale natural disasters and terrorism. We all have a role in “hometown” security and Citizen Corps provides local opportunities for everyone to prepare, train, and volunteer!

## Operation Hope and FEMA Announce “Project Restore HOPE”



In a press conference, Operation Hope and FEMA announce “Project Restore Hope.” Photograph compliment of Operation Hope.

Operation Hope, Inc. is a nonprofit social investment bank that aims to provide urban and inner-city persons with financial literacy through economic empowerment programs. Operation Hope’s founder and CEO, John Bryant, created the nonprofit after the Rodney King riots shattered the civic peace—or the perceived peaceful state—of Los Angeles. Bryant knew the 1992 riots sprang from economic disparity as well as racial prejudice. Urban economic inequality was exacerbated and brought to the forefront of news coverage during Hurricane Katrina. In Bryant’s “No More Katrinas” *Silver Rights Movement Digest*, he speaks of the “economic levees” that broke after Hurricane Katrina ravaged the

Gulf Coast. He writes this of the current situation of Hurricane Katrina victims:

*This is what happens when you have a population of people who were effectively in a state of personal economic disaster even before Katrina hit them... This is what happens when the average income in the 9<sup>th</sup> Ward in Louisiana was \$10,300 annually...Individuals living from paycheck to paycheck; financially illiterate, economically unprepared, and fundamentally under-educated—in one of the poorest states in the nation...2-3 months following this disaster, I would be willing to wager that the average Katrina victim is doing much worse. And this trend will continue. Allow me to draw the picture:*

- *More than 500,000 automobiles destroyed in Hurricane Katrina and counting.*
- *More than 630,000 mortgages effectively in a bubble and unresolved, in the disaster zone.*

*Or put more simply:*

*Car loans, and no cars; Home loans, and no more homes... Consumer debt and credit card bills and no jobs.*



The ruins of an oyster business in Bayou La Batre, Alabama. Photo compliment of Operation HOPE and Alix Stayton (photographer).

Since its founding in 1992, Operation Hope has a long list of achievements, including the creation of 800 new homeowners and

small business owners, more than \$125 million in funded loans, and more than \$240 million in commitments for homeownership and small business loans from their 250 bank and corporate partners.

Now, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Operation Hope have announced a new project to aid Hurricane victims in getting back on their feet. The initiative, *Project Restore Hope*, will provide financial and economic counseling in a number of ways, including:

- Assistance in reclaiming lost or destroyed financial documents and personal identification
- Emergency budget guidance
- Emergency credit management
- Assistance with deferring mortgage payments
- Assistance in working with creditors
- Referrals to government or private agencies
- Insurance claims assistance

For more information on *Project Restore Hope*, visit [www.operationhope.org](http://www.operationhope.org)

## **Partnership for Success:**

### **Law Enforcement and CERT Work Together to Enhance Emergency Preparedness**

A Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS) *In Focus* edition features the Clanton, Alabama, Police Department and its Explorer Program in the following article, republished below. To learn more about partnerships between law enforcement and Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) in communities around the nation, visit [www.policevolunteers.org](http://www.policevolunteers.org).



#### *CPD Explorers Program*

Clanton Police Department (CPD) restarted their Explorer program in 2004 after a period of dormancy. Law Enforcement Exploring is designed to introduce young men and women to law enforcement through hands-on career activities. CPD currently has 12 Police Explorers, aged 15-21. Demand is high for an Explorer program among high school students in Clanton and CPD is committed to offering interested youth a program with a focus on training and skills gathering. Alabama is prone to various types of severe weather conditions, including hurricanes, tornados, and ice storms. Due to these weather-

related threats, CPD has concentrated the bulk of its Explorer training on emergency and disaster security, cleanup, medical assistance, and search and rescue skills.

Following the recommendation of county emergency management, CPD Police Explorers completed the CERT training course and now serve as an organized CERT team that can respond to Clanton and surrounding communities in the event of an emergency. Explorers have also been trained in traffic control, security, and emergency shelter services, which includes the set-up and operation of shelters and support services to shelters.

The program is in the process of assembling a disaster response vehicle that will have emergency equipment such as generators, emergency lights, saws, axes, and other equipment that can be used to clean up a disaster scene. The team is also capable of establishing a mobile medical treatment unit in addition to providing support capabilities for fire units, EMA units, and other law enforcement units. In addition to their CERT training, the Explorers have received vehicle extrication training, which involves rescuing drivers trapped in their vehicles.

CPD Explorers had the opportunity to test their skills this summer when Hurricane Dennis hit their area in July. Due to a lack of medical personnel at a shelter for special needs patients, CPD was contacted to send their medically trained explorers to staff the shelter and monitor patients. Explorers were also on hand to assist emergency personnel with security surrounding Hurricane Dennis.

#### *Program Benefits:*

Through its Explorer program, CPD aims to offer youth a background in the field of law enforcement as well as real life skills they can use in any profession they pursue. CPD does this by focusing on law enforcement, as well as fire, ambulance, and nursing training to provide their Explorers with a well-rounded skill set. One of the most important benefits of the program is exposing youth to their capabilities and offering them meaningful ways to contribute to their communities today and in the future by pursuing law enforcement careers. Incorporating CERT training into their program, CPD has prepared their Explorers with lifesaving skills they can use in their homes, neighborhoods, and communities.



## Huntsville's First VIPS Program

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The following article was submitted by Matt Smith, the volunteer coordinator at the Volunteer Center of Madison County:

The Volunteer Center of Madison County is currently heading up a cornucopia of initiatives to better prepare and inform Huntsville and Madison County. Thanks to the Citizen Corps Conference held in November in Florence, The Volunteer Center and Huntsville Police Department have begun to form the community's first Volunteers In Police Service (VIPS) program. The Volunteer Center executive director Sheila McFerran says, "A community that is more active is a community that is more accountable. We're challenging everyone in the community to get involved with making Madison County a safer place to live, work, and raise our families." In addition to VIPS, The Volunteer Center is currently spearheading the county's efforts at uniting resources to form VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster). Together with 35 local agencies, The Volunteer Center is working to make sure Madison County and its residents are ready for whatever surprises lurk in 2006. For more information, interested parties can contact Matt Smith at [matt@volunteerhsv.org](mailto:matt@volunteerhsv.org).



Vincent Talucci, Director of the VIPS program, speaks at Alabama's 2005 Citizen Corps Conference in Florence.

## Alabama's First Medical Reserve Corps Continues to Make Strides!

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In March 2005, the United States Surgeon General approved Alabama's first Medical Reserve Corps (MRC). Under the auspices of the Tuskegee Area Health Education Center, the Black Belt Medical Reserve Corps (BBMRC) continues to prepare, educate, and deploy to help local communities in times of need.

The BBMRC is currently aiding Alabama with a number of hurricane-related relief projects. The BBMRC efforts are combined with help from the local Red Cross and the

local Ministers Council. This collaboration in efforts allows community members a variety of opportunities to aid evacuees in addressing pressing needs. The following highlights of BBMRC's programs and contributions to the relief effort were submitted by Benjamin Rackley, Director of the Black Belt Medical Reserve Corps:

- At Nostasulga High School, the BBMRC provided counseling staff and support to the faculty, student body, and Parent Teacher Association to help the 23 displaced students adjust to their new community.
- The BBMRC helped provide grief counseling to affected members of the community.
- Working with the local Ministers Council and faith-based organizations, the BBMRC assisted soup kitchens at multiple locations in the community.
- The BBMRC co-sponsored a Health Fair for the evacuees. The Health Fair gave many uninsured evacuees an opportunity to see health care providers and receive prescriptions. A number of diabetics came and received medication (who had previously been without it) while other, unknowing diabetics had a chance to be seen, properly diagnosed, and treated.
- The BBMRC continues to assist evacuees in the search for permanent housing and employment. A career fair was held in an adjacent city for those who had cars and were able to travel. For those unable to attend or travel long distances to find employment, a number of jobs were found in the Black Belt community of Macon County.
- More than \$55,000 was raised to purchase furniture and other critical items to help meet the needs of new residents. Local citizens also donated furniture and worked closely together with other individuals willing to volunteer their time and resources to transport the goods.
- To help prepare for future disasters, the BBMRC printed and handed out 500 bookmarks with emergency preparedness information. Additionally, the BBMRC distributed 50 copies of Macon County's emergency plan and conducted two classes for First Responder training using Department of Transportation curriculum. The professional makeup of the 28+ people certified included physicians, nurses, firefighters, law enforcement officers, nutritionists, emergency management technicians, and administrative staff.

Alabama's Black Belt Medical Reserve Corps assumed an active role in responding to the needs of evacuees within the state. From its conception to its current programs and initiatives, Alabama's first Medical Reserve Corps continues to pave the way in helping citizens prepare and respond to emergencies and disasters of all kinds.





## Neighborhood Watch

### Terrorism Awareness

Since September 11, Neighborhood Watch has made a deliberate effort to include terrorism awareness and education in its mission. To learn more about these man-made disasters, the Department of Homeland Security suggests all citizens learn how to prepare for and respond to an attack.

To help prepare for the unexpected, READYAmerica and Neighborhood Watch suggest the following steps: *Get a Kit*, *Make a Plan*, and *Be Informed*.

**Step 1, *Get a Kit*:** When preparing an emergency kit, the most important thing is to ensure the basics of survival: fresh water, food, clean air, and warmth. At [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov), you will find a list of suggested supplies.

**Step 2, *Make a Plan*:** You should plan ahead of time what to do in the event of an emergency. Visit [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) for detailed information on how to create a family plan, and learn about site-specific emergency plans.

**Step 3, *Be Informed*:** Learn how to prepare for and react properly to different kinds of threats, including chemical, biological, radiation, and nuclear. Information about each of these potential threats can be found at [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov).

## Fire Corps Road Show

After celebrating their first year anniversary, Fire Corps is not slowing down! In the upcoming months, Fire

Corps is taking the program across the nation to a number of different events. In March you will find the Fire Corps at the national *EMS (Emergency Medical Services) Today Conference and Exposition* hosted in Baltimore, Maryland. Held from March 24-25, the *EMS Today Conference and Exposition* will look at the latest techniques in EMS, host a number of professional sessions, and discuss what can be learned from Hurricane Katrina.



In April, you will find Fire Corps at two key events. On April 6 Fire Corps will be at the Congressional Fire Services Institute (CFSI) *18<sup>th</sup> Annual National Fire & Emergency Services Dinner and Seminars*. The *Dinner* is an opportunity to engage congressional leaders and administration officials with fire service leaders in discussion about federal

programs and legislation addressing the needs of local first responders. Fire Corps will also be at the *Fire Department Instructors Conference (FDIC)* on April 24-29 in Indianapolis, Indiana. The *FDIC* allows you to participate in hands-on training with the top instructors in the country and learn the latest techniques and issues facing the fire industry in hard-hitting classrooms.

For more information on Fire Corps and where they will be attending, visit

[www.firecorps.org](http://www.firecorps.org)



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## **VISTA Disaster Response and Recovery Team**

The Alabama Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (GFBCI) brought five AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) members onboard to serve alongside staff in early November 2005. Led by GFBCI Emergency Preparedness and Response Coordinator, Alison Welty, the first five members began their year of service on November 7th, and are focusing on disaster response and recovery. The team will help design and implement a 10- year plan to end chronic homelessness; set up an Interfaith Disaster Network to aid communities around the state in preparing, mitigating and responding to disasters; and coordinate volunteers and large-scale donations for the State of Alabama.

Each month we will introduce a member of the Alabama Disaster Response and Recovery Team. February's team member of the month is Ivonne Garcia.

### **VISTA of the Month—Ivonne Garcia**



As a recent graduate from SUNY Geneseo I have been brought on board by the Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives to work with the Interagency Council on Homelessness. I am originally from Buffalo, New York and I joined AmeriCorps to aid in long term Hurricane Katrina recovery. In my role with the Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives I hope to gain perspective of the natural disasters that hit the gulf and bring a better understanding of the ramifications of the disasters to those who were not affected. I am very excited to begin this year-long journey and anticipate great things in the future.



## Local and National Updates

### Chilton County Students Learn About Emergency Preparedness

In October, Chilton County EMA and Homeland Security sponsored a week-long disaster and severe weather promotion at Clanton Intermediate School. Students toured a tornado simulator trailer, provided by Collins Chapel Fire Department, in addition to creating “Disaster Preparedness Posters.” These kinds of activities are made possible by Citizen Corps grants.



Pictured above are the winners of the “Disaster Preparedness Poster Contest”: fifth grader Curt Bost (first place, \$75); third grader Mackenzie Wanyo (second place, \$50); and third grader Lane Collins (third place, \$25). The winners are pictured with Principal Dennis Cobb and Wendy Wright of the EMA.

Information and photograph reprinted with permission from *The Clanton Advertiser*.

### National CERT Conference: *Twenty Years of Commitment to the Community*

The California Services Corps in partnership with the City and County agencies in Los Angeles will host the *2006 National CERT Conference* May 15-17, 2006. The conference theme, “20 Years of Commitment to the Community” commemorates twenty years of CERT training in the place where it all began—Los Angeles.



The *2006 National CERT Conference* will offer courses on program management, emergency preparedness, lessons learned, and other topics that address the success of CERT programs nationwide. In addition to these courses, there will be guest speakers, workshops, and plenty of time to network. For more information, visit [www.certconference2006.com](http://www.certconference2006.com). We hope to see you there!

## **Name the Newsletter Contest!**

The Alabama Citizen Corps Newsletter is looking for a name. The person or group that submits the winning name will win a prize and be featured in the March edition of the newsletter.

Newsletter name submissions should be sent to:  
alison.welty@servealabama.gov, no later than Thursday,  
February 15.



**Good Luck!**

## **Emergency Preparedness Tip #2:**

### ***Oh, the places you'll go:***



Pick a place to meet after a disaster. Designate two meeting places. Choose one right outside your home, in case of a sudden household emergency, such as a fire. The second place you chose needs to be outside your neighborhood, in the event that it is not safe to stay near or return to your home.

## **We know you have stories. We want to hear them.**

The Alabama Citizen Corps Council is looking for articles, pictures, updates, lessons learned, tips, useful websites and events for this monthly newsletter. Please send any information on Citizen Corps, CERT, Volunteers in Police Service, Neighborhood Watch, Medical Reserve Corps, Fire Corps, or anything else of interest to Citizen Corps Councils to: alison.welty@servealabama.gov. Submissions are due by the 15th of each month to be published in the following month's newsletter, space permitting.

## **Give Us Your Feedback!**

Have suggestions or ideas for topics? Please send them to Megan Bayha at  
[megan.bayha@servealabama.gov](mailto:megan.bayha@servealabama.gov).

The *Citizen Corps Newsletter* is a monthly publication of the Alabama Citizen Corps Council, a program of the Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (GFBCI). To be added or removed from our distribution list, please contact the GFBCI via email at [info@servealabama.gov](mailto:info@servealabama.gov).